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NATIONAL SECURITY

MESSAGE

FROM

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

TRANSMITTING

INFORMATION CONCERNING HIS INTENTIONS WITH REGARD TO REDUCTIONS IN THE DEFENSE BUDGET

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To the Congress of the United States:

On May 15 I wrote to the leadership of the Congress to express my deep concern regarding the large reductions in our defense program proposed by the House Budget Committee. In my letter I made it clear that these huge reductions would have a severe impact on our national security, and I stated my intent to work with the Congress—both Senate and House—to protect those programs most vital to our national security, including our Strategic Modernization Program.

The extraordinary events of this year's congressional review of my defense proposals and the extreme sensitivity of international events compel me to restate to the Congress, and to the American people, my intention and rationale for protecting those few high-priority programs that form the very foundation of our Nation's security in this troubled world.

Almost five years ago, in October 1981, I announced a balanced and coherent program for rebuilding America's strategic forces. That five-part modernization program was designed to redress the growing strategic imbalance between the United States and the Soviet Union, to strengthen and modernize the U.S. forces that have deterred nuclear war for almost 40 years, and to pave the way for meaningful arms control negotiations aimed at significantly reducing the existing nuclear arsenals of both the United States and the Soviet Union.

These past five years have been a cooperative effort. With a few exceptions, the Congress has supported our five-part program. Because we have worked together we have achieved results in which we can all take pride. With the stability provided by the Congress, our programs have been well managed and have cost less than we planned in almost all cases.

Our modernization program has also achieved many of the military and political results we expected. Deterrence has been strengthened, and we are stronger and more able to defend the values we hold dear. Our determined progress has been understood by the Soviets and, as predicted, they have returned to the negotiation table in Geneva.

As our negotiators in Geneva seek equitable and verifiable agreements, they are mindful that we have no more urgent task in preserving peace and freedom than the deterrence of nuclear confrontation or war. The strategic programs now before the Congress represent a vital foundation to this search for a more stable peace. They are designed to restore and strengthen our traditional approach to deterrence, while we seek new research initiatives to harness rapidly advancing technologies in order to provide for a safer world.

We must also always remember that maintaining a strong nuclear deterrent does much more than prevent nuclear war. Strong

U.S. nuclear forces also contribute significantly to deterring aggression with conventional forces. In calculating what they call "the correlation of forces," the Soviet political and military leadership are ever mindful of the state of the nuclear balance between the United States and the Soviet Union. As a result, a strong U.S. strategic deterrent decreases the threat of any Soviet aggression and serves as the vital background that discourages Soviet attack—nuclear or conventional—upon us, our allies, or our interests abroad. Any weakening of our nuclear deterrent, leaving the Soviet Union with superior nuclear forces, could have the opposite effect. It could invite the Soviet Union to rely on such an advantage. Our strategic programs provide, therefore, a beneficial effect that far outweighs the less than 15 percent of the defense budget they consume. They are affordable—they are vital.

The Congress will recall that this Nation entered the 1980s after a decade of restraint in the modernization of our nuclear forces unmatched by the Soviet Union. Facing an increasingly capable Soviet force, all three legs of our own strategic Triad badly needed modernization: Our forces were becoming obsolescent and increasingly were losing both their military effectiveness and survivability in the face of steadily improving Soviet capabilities. Additionally, and perhaps most importantly, the essential command, control, and communications networks that undergird our forces had grown fragile and susceptible to Soviet disruption.

This loss in survivability of U.S. strategic forces, coupled with the magnitude of the Soviet buildup, had begun to erode seriously the stability of the strategic balance between the United States and the Soviet Union. The five-part Strategic Modernization Program I submitted to the Congress in October 1981 was designed to address all these dangerous deficiencies.

Over the past five years, with the support and cooperation of the Congress, we have made substantial progress in strengthening our deterrent capabilities:

We have made major strides in upgrading our warning sensors by modernizing the Thule Ballistic Missile Early Warning (BMEWS) radar, by improving the capabilities of the existing Pave Paws radars, and constructing two new ones to fill gaps in coverage—all in compliance with the ABM Treaty. Also by deploying a series of mobile ground terminals, we are strengthening the command and control network. We have further strengthened presidential control of our forces by a number of measures including continued deployment of the Defense Satellite Communication System (DSCS) III, and by fielding the Jam Resistant Secure Communications system.

Through cooperation with the Congress we have improved and stabilized the Trident submarine construction program by ensuring the continued production of one of these new strategic submarines per year.

Our two-bomber program has progressed successfully. The B–1B is being produced on schedule and within our cost estimates. Our low observables research program over these past five years has proven that stealth works far better than anyone would have believed possible five years ago. Our program has also removed much of the risk we faced when we first began what has become the most

revolutionary development in military aviation since World War II. Accordingly, our Advanced Technology Bomber and Advanced Cruise Missiles will be able to penetrate improved Soviet defenses for the foreseeable future. The effectiveness of our aging B–52s has been extended by equipping them with air-launched cruise missiles.

The Peacekeeper ICBM has had a near-flawless development cycle, and the first of these badly needed missiles will begin standing alert later this year.

Additionally—and in my view most significantly for the long-term safety of America and stable world peace—we have launched the Strategic Defense Initiative program and are even now deeply engaged in researching how we might be able to employ our technical genius to eliminate one day the threat of nuclear ballistic missiles.

We can be justifiably proud of what we have accomplished by working together, but the task is far from finished. While recognizing the progress just listed, we must be clear that the advanced systems that have been proceeding through intensive development programs during the past five years are only now at the critical stage of deployment. Those unfamiliar with the sequence of research, development, and deployment all too often assume that our commitment to build a new system results in its immediate deployment. This error may explain the view held by some that we have now spent enough on restoring our strategic capabilities and that we can begin to cut those programs significantly. In fact, the real benefits of our strategic modernization efforts will be realized only if we complete the tasks that we have begun with the research and development phase. To stretch or disrupt these programs now would not only endanger deterrence but would be a wasteful and costly misuse of our scarce defense resources. In particular, the following steps are essential:

Further improvements to our warning systems, and the strengthening of strategic command, control, and communications through deployment of the MILSTAR satellite communication system, the Ground Warning Emergency Network (GWEN), the E6A TACAMO aircraft for communication with strategic submarines, and improved bomber communications should be implemented as soon as possible.

The Trident II (D–5) missile—whose enduring hard-target capability is so vital to our strategy of flexible response—begins flight-testing next January. The deployment of D–5-equipped submarines must continue as planned; continued production of one Trident submarine per year is critical to providing an effective and survivable sea-based force in the 1990s and beyond.

The second half of our two-bomber program, the final development and deployment of the Advanced Technology Bomber, must reach fruition on schedule. I recommended the two-bomber program—and the Congress approved it—precisely because it provided a phased near-term and a longer-term solution. To pause now, before we have achieved the second part of the program—the stealthy ATB, the part designed to provide the answer for the longer-term—would be to undercut completely our capability to maintain an effective bomber force that could penetrate air de-

fenses into the 21st century, and ignore the enormous potential that stealth adds to deterrence.

We are in the stages of final development of—and soon will begin to deploy—the Advanced Cruise Missile. In 1983 procurement of our older Air-Launched Cruise Missile was stopped so we could take advantage of this far more capable stealthy new missile. Having taken that step, continuation of the ACM program is essential. In fact, I have asked the Secretary of Defense to work with the Congress to accelerate this program.

Modernization of the ICBM force remains incomplete—and, given congressional action last year, truncated. My FY 87 budget request contains funds that will allow us to move forward, with the cooperation of the Congress, to select a basing mode for the second 50 Peacekeeper missiles and to place the Small ICBM into full-scale development. This Fall, the Department of Defense will recommend, in accordance with my May 27, 1986, decision on interim restraint, an appropriate best configuration, in terms of weight, number of warheads, and production schedule, for the Small ICBM. The long-range viability of our strategic Triad depends on the modernization of the land-based leg through the deployment of the Peacekeeper and Small mobile ICBMs.

The fifth part of our Strategic Modernization Program is strategic defense. The SDI program I submitted to the Congress in 1984 was a carefully structured effort that integrated realistic technical opportunities in a research effort, under prudent financial planning. By funding SDI at lower-than-requested levels, the Congress has narrowed the scope of our research, forcing us to make decisions on candidate technologies more quickly than we had originally desired. I believe it would be most unwise to delay and further restrict the program.

When I launched the SDI, I pledged to the American people a determined effort to investigate whether it is possible to build an effective defense against ballistic missiles. If advanced technology enables us to eliminate the threat of nuclear ballistic missiles—and I believe it can—we need to know this so that we can decide how we can build a safer strategic relationship that would rely increasingly on defensive systems that threaten no one. Also, it is important to have a vigorous research effort now because the Soviets have long been heavily engaged in their own strategic defense efforts, which in their case go well beyond research, and without the fiscal restrictions that have been placed on our SDI program. Our SDI program threatens no one. But if the Soviets are allowed to unilaterally continue to improve their strategic defenses, including a long-standing research effort in many of the same technologies being investigated by our SDI program or future ability to deter Soviet aggression will be significantly and dangerously reduced.

I frequently hear two arguments—one political, one scientific—against the SDI. The first is that SDI would be "destabilizing." This argument implies that peace is best maintained by preserving in perpetuity a U.S.-Soviet relationship of mutual vulnerability to missile attack. The argument rests on the twin assumptions that the Soviet Union would agree with us in maintaining this relationship, by abstaining from building defensive systems and by halting the buildup of offensive systems.

Of course, we have since discovered that both these assumptions were wrong: Since the signing of the ABM Treaty the Soviet Union has spent roughly as much on strategic defense as it has on strategic offensive forces. And certainly the Soviet Union, in building a first-strike capability, never accepted the premise that the West should be allowed to possess secure retaliatory forces. Since the Soviet leadership does not share our views of the world—and since we must be able to deter them from acting rashly or aggressively in a crisis—we should be taking their actions seriously, and not remain wedded to disproven assumptions. Conducting our own policy on the basis of false assumptions about Soviet policies is dangerous and destabilizing. Exploring technologies that might blunt the Soviet ability to attack us, on the other hand, may well give us the means to reestablish and ensure strategic stability over the long term.

The "scientific" objection I hear to SDI is that "it won't work." Clearly the Soviet researchers who have been engaged for the past 10 or 20 years on the Soviet version of SDI do not believe the arguments often heard from Soviet negotiators that SDI won't work. How can such a judgment be made when the research necessary to decide this is incomplete? Science is based on knowledge gained through research and testing. It is exactly such knowledge that the SDI program is designed to produce. Where would we be today if Bell, or Edison, or the Wright brothers curtailed their efforts because untested judgments about their work indicated they could never succeed? To cut SDI on these grounds would run counter to the American spirit that pushed back frontiers in all realms of endeavor. I cannot accept this—and I do not believe the Congress should allow it.

I am also aware that certain members of Congress believe that we are attempting to move too quickly on the SDI program. These members would constrain the growth in the SDI program to the same level of growth as the entire Department of Defense budget. This logic is fatally flawed. The DOD budget is made up of thousands of programs and accounts that grow and decline in response to the military needs of the Department. To constrain SDI research by some fictional average of all these independent events would ignore the enormous advantage of American free enterprise to exploit technology to the limits of our knowledge. The cuts SDI has suffered to date have already limited our ability to fully exploit Western technology. Further cuts will only compound this problem.

We have also made good technical progress in closing the gap between the United States and the Soviet Union in antisatellite systems. But progress in our laboratories does not give us military capabilities. Progress in the lab must be verified and tested before a system can be made operational. Unfortunately, our program is inhibited by congressionally imposed restrictions on testing—restrictions that have increased program costs and ultimately will cripple our efforts to create a credible deterrent in this area. Failure to provide a deterrent "in-kind" to the existing, operational Soviet system could create dangerous temptations for Soviet attacks on our satellites in time of crisis or during a conventional war. This failure to provide a capability to counter satellites that directly support hostile military actions also undercuts deterrence.

Just as our strategic force programs are designed to assure an effective and credible deterrent for the United States and our allies, so too our efforts to reduce substantially the levels of U.S. and Soviet nuclear arms are not ends in themselves but are designed to contribute to increased U.S. and allied security and global peace and stability. Over the past several years, we have put forward a series of far-reaching arms control proposals that seek concrete steps toward such enhanced security and stability.

In the Strategic Arms Reductions Talks (START), we have continued to set a priority on the achievement of significant, equitable, and effectively verifiable reductions in the Soviet and U.S. nuclear arsenals, while strengthening strategic stability. Through agreements on such reductions we seek to achieve a safer world and to work, on a sound basis, toward our long-term objective of ultimately eliminating all nuclear weapons. Our proposals include the principle of 50-percent reductions for comparable strategic systems, as well as trade-off and "build-down" concepts designed to contribute enhanced stability at lower levels of arms.

Since the overall strategic equation can be directly affected by other nuclear forces, in particular by those of longer and intermediate range, we have applied similar security and stability principles in a related area of nuclear weapons arms control—the negotiations on Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (INF). We are proposing a global solution of completely eliminating U.S. and Soviet longer-range land-based INF missiles (LRINF) as our preference or, as an intermediate step, U.S./Soviet equality in LRINF missile warheads at any level.

Finally, as part of the Nuclear and Space talks in Geneva, we have sought in the Defense and Space negotiating group to initiate a dialogue with the Soviets on the vital relationship between strategic offense and defense and on a possible cooperative transition to a more defense-reliant posture, should the research on defensive technologies prove successful. We are conducting research on strategic defense as a prudent hedge against the Soviet buildup in offense and defense so that we can establish and preserve the option for shifting the basis of deterrence to defensive systems that threaten no one.

In each of these arms control efforts, as in parallel effort involving chemical and conventional forces, and in measures we and our allies have proposed to build confidence and reduce the risk of misunderstanding between East and West, we have focused on concrete steps that involve real reductions and constraints, that are equitable in contributing to security and stability, and that can be effectively verified. Our proposals have the strong support of our allies and provide a sound basis for significant progress in the future.

I am hopeful that the Congress therefore will join with me to protect the strategic modernization programs that make these negotiations possible. The Soviets are well-informed regarding congressional support for our modernization programs. If they detect a collapse of American resolve, we will see no movement in the negotiations because the Soviets will know they are better off by letting the Congress reduce our programs unilaterally rather than by engaging in meaningful negotiations that would result in both U.S.

and Soviet systems being reduced on an equitable and verifiable basis.

On April 22, 1986, I wrote to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives concerning appropriate near-term U.S. responses to the continuing pattern of Soviet noncompliance with existing arms control agreements. In my letter I reviewed the justification and rationale for our policy of interim restraint and proportionate response. I also spoke of my judgment that it remained in the interest of the United States and its allies to try to establish an interim framework of truly mutual restraint on strategic offensive arms as we pursued with renewed vigor our goal of real reductions in the size of existing nuclear arsenals through the ongoing negotiations in Geneva. My letter explained why my highest priority of all our defense needs remains the full implementation of the Strategic Modernization Program, to underwrite our deterrence today, and the pursuit of the SDI research program to provide better alternatives for the future.

The U.S. Strategic Modernization Program, including the deployment of the full 100 Peacekeeper missiles, as called for by the Scowcroft Commission, is the foundation for all future U.S. options and provides a solid basis that can and will be adjusted over time to respond most efficiently to the continued Soviet strategic buildup. It is absolutely critical that this program not be permitted to erode. That would be the worst way to respond to the continuing pattern of Soviet activities, would increase the risk to our security and that of our allies, would undercut our ability to negotiate the reductions we all seek in existing arsenals, and thus send precisely the wrong signal to the Soviet leadership.

Our attempt to use the structure of SALT as the basis for interim restraint until a START agreement can be achieved has always been based on the assumption of Soviet reciprocity. It makes no sense for the United States to continue to support the SALT structure while the Soviet Union undermines the foundation of SALT by its continued, uncorrected noncompliance. Unfortunately, the Soviet Union has not reciprocated. Therefore, in the future, the United States will base decisions regarding its strategic forces on the nature and magnitude of the threat posed by the Soviet Union, rather than on standards contained in expired SALT agreements unilaterally observed by the United States.

On the 27th of May, after consulting with the Congress and with our allies, I announced my decision to retire two older Poseidon submarines as the eighth Trident submarine begins sea trials. This means the United States will stay in technical observance of SALT for some months, thus giving the Soviet Union still more time to correct their erosion of SALT. If they do, I will take this into account.

I believe we must now look to the future, not to the past. The primary task we now face is to build a new structure, one based on significant, equitable, and verifiable reductions in the size of existing U.S. and Soviet nuclear arsenals. This is what we are proposing in the ongoing Geneva negotiations.

Until this is achieved, the United States will continue to exercise the utmost restraint. Assuming no significant change in the threat we face, as we implement the Strategic Modernization Program,

the United States will not deploy more strategic nuclear delivery vehicles or strategic ballistic missile warheads than the Soviet Union.

Thus, we come to one of those unique crossroads of history where nations decide their fate. Our choices are clear. We can hold firm to our policies of modernizing to maintain our deterrent strength that has preserved the peace for 40 years or we can shrink from the challenge by offering a host of excuses. We can strengthen the hand of our negotiators in Geneva to achieve deep, equitable, and verifiable reductions or, by unilaterally reducing our forces, we can make a mockery of the only process that leads us toward meaningful arms control.

There is no free ride. Some people will argue that strategic forces must take cuts along with everything else when budgets are tight. Those "spread-the-pain" theories are not only false, they are dangerous. Every dollar taken from our strategic programs is a victory for potential aggressors. Every cut or delay weakens our cause in Geneva and adds materially to the ultimate cost of deterrence. It is not unreasonable for a great nation like the United States to invest the relatively modest sums we have requested to maintain a credible deterrence and preserve the peace. In fact, it is the very existence of these investments that makes us first among the nations of the free world.

In considering our proposed funding for strategic programs, I would ask each and every member of the Congress to consider the stakes involved. The Congress can proceed along the path of strategic modernization we charted five years ago, and strengthen thereby our ability to deter both conventional and nuclear coercion or aggression. It can permit us to proceed as quickly and efficiently as possible to determine how we can create a safer world and ensure peace and stability for the longer term. Alternatively, by "cutting here and trimming there," the Congress can stretch programs, thereby delaying scientific results, postponing the deployment of capabilities that we all agree are necessary, and, as a further penalty, increasing programmatic costs. I know which choice the American people would make.

This year I have begun to implement the recommendations of my Blue Ribbon Commission on Defense Management, the Packard Commission. This group of distinguished Americans once again pointed out the enormous importance of stability to our defense programs. These complex and intricate programs are difficult to manage at best because they involve new technologies and new concepts. They are impossible to manage if they become hostage to short-term budget issues that reduce and delay them at every turn.

We recognized in 1981 that we had to make strategic modernization our first priority. We have done so—and it has paid clear dividends. Our strategic programs have been models of management efficiency where we have kept them stable and on track. Internationally, our progress has paved the way to negotiations now in progress where for the first time the prospect of deep nuclear arms reductions is before us.

The essential feature and greatest strength of the 1981 Strategic Modernization Program is its integrated, phased nature. A failure to follow through with this design risks squandering the progress

we have made and the effort—and money—we have invested thus far.

Having come this far, we must not falter now. If we do, the fruits of all our labor will be gone in the twinkling of an eye. I cannot allow this to happen. I cannot and will not accept a defense bill that undercuts our Strategic Modernization Program and the prospect of significant and equitable arms reductions. The security and peace of the world depend on the credibility of our strategic forces. I pledge myself and my Administration to do everything that can be done to ensure that our security is maintained and our strategic forces are sufficient to meet our needs.

RONALD REAGAN.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *June 3, 1986.*

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